

Human Rights Now



Oral statement on agenda Item 7 GD

UN Human Rights Council 27th Session,

Geneva, 8- 26 2014 Speaker: Mr. Bassim Boutemine

Human Rights Now condemns all violations of international humanitarian law committed by Israel and Hamas during the latest Gaza conflict. Especially the military offensive conducted by the Israel military is disproportionate and constitutes massive violations of international law.

Since the Operation Protective Edge started in July, more than 2000 people, including 500 children have been killed in Gaza by the Israel military offensive. It was reported that the Israel Defence Force (IDF) attacked significant numbers of civilian objectives throughout Gaza, including 6 UN schools filled with civilians. Many of such attacks clearly constitute war crimes. HRN urges the Human Rights Council and its member states to take all effective measures to bring justice and ensure accountability of such flagrant violations of international humanitarian law.

We must recall that the international community condoned impunity over past violations in Gaza. After the Operation Cast Lead between 2008 and 2009, the UN fact finding mission documented extensive violations and concludes that war crimes had been committed by Israel. The Goldstone report recommended both parties and the UN to take concrete measures toward investigation and accountability. However, the international community has taken no concrete step so far. Prevailing impunity condoned by the international community has indeed helped Israel conduct massive violations of international law, killing a large number of innocent people in Gaza this time. Such failure should never be repeated again.

However, many member states of this Council have abstained from the Council resolution of the 21st special session. More regrettably, the United States has opposed the resolution. It is also deplorable that Israel maintains its hostile attitude toward the Commission of Inquiry and other investigations over the military action in Gaza.

HRN calls all member states of this Council to unanimously support the Commission of Inquiry on Gaza and insist that Israel cooperate with the UN investigation. We also call for a united effort of the international community to ensure all steps toward justice and accountability for all alleged crimes in the Gaza conflict.

Lastly, we must stress that the current blockade constitutes clear violation of the fourth Geneva Convention and thus must be lifted immediately and unconditionally.

Thank you.